M. KAPLAN DIARIES - TRANSCRIPTIONS (35) 1940 JUNE 8 - 1940 JULY 21

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I had hoped to start working on the paper which I am expected to read at the convention of the Rabbinical Assembly on "The Place of the Rabbi in American Jewish Life." The fear and tension under which every one labors in view of the Nazi threat to overwhelm the Allies and to challenge this country are enough to stifle all thought that has no bearing on the immediate danger. I have this Finkephobia to overcome. Physically I have been under the weather for the last ten days due to sciatica in my hips. All in all I find myself at present bereft of that very hope and courage which it is my function to instil in others. Yet if men like Churchill and Reynaud can manage to carry on in the face of such national defeats and disasters as are their daily portion, no one worth his salt has a right to give in to such petty troubles and worries as the Seminary has been subjecting me for the last few years, and even to the very real dangers that hang over Jewish life.

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Saturday, June 8, 1940

This morning Lena and I went to the Seminary to attend the baccalaureate services and to be present at the dinner given by Mrs. Adler in honor of the graduates. I had naturally experienced a great deal of inner resistance to going to the Seminary, for seldom do I come away from such occasions without ruffled feelings. But I made up my mind that I would not give in tomyself and submit to whatever humiliation would be meted out to me. The graduation exercises also are an ordeal, but those I have to take part in as a matter of duty. The preliminary exercises, however, I would always manage to stay away from. This time, however, I feel that I want to do nothing to give Finky an opportunity to charge me with keeping aloof. So I simply steeled myself and went. And I must say that I came off better than I had ever expected. There were even no speaches after the dinner, so that no one had any oppor-

tunity to make any insinuation against Reconstructionism, and I avoided the dilemma of either being called upon and of making a speech for which I would afterwards feel like kicking myself, or not being called upon and feeling hurt.

The baccalaureate sermon was given by Schussheim. It was a very mediocre effort. He was very nervous. I don't blame him. It is very difficult to say anything encouraging nowadays in which one can believe whole-heartedly. The audience consisted for the most part of students and Faculty. (The Faculty are seated on the platform.) As soon as Schussheim began to speak, Prof. Marx went to sleep and did not wake up until the sermon was over. Marx does that invariably and no one has ever taken him to task for it. It seems to be one of his vanities to boast of his inability to write a sermon or to listen to one withoug going off into deep sleep.

I have been working for a long time with Ira and Eugene Kohn on the formulation of a statement about Reconstructionism, which might be used as a means of making members of the R. Foundation. We submitted such a statement to the Editorial Board of the R. last Tuesday night and they criticized it on the ground that it was too academic and abstract. I am very much afraid that we have come up against a snag which is inherent in Jewish life. The very fact that it is in need of reconstruction means that it calls for changes not in this or that particular but in the very principles underlying it. How then is it possible to avcid dealing with principles, when setting forth the meaning of reconstructionism? If our people were really in earnest about the movement they wouldn't make such fuss in trying to cater to the salesmanship mentality. Communism for example expects its adherents to master abstractions compared with which those of Reconstructionism sound like a kinder-

garten story. But the difference is that Communists are in earnest. This is why they don't have to be spoon fed. But so far there are hardly two or three zealous Reconstructionists. Our most active workers have not even made the grade of "fellow travelers."

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Monday, June 10, 1940

Yesterday the graduation exercises of the Seminary took place, the first under Finkelstein's presidency. If the coming years during his incumbency everything will run as smoothly as did the exercises, I shall have no reason to complain. The two addresses, Stroock's and Ginzberg's, dealt with Cyrus Adler, were good and to the point. I marveled at the cleverness with which Ginzberg handled his theme, "Cyrus Adler and Jewish Scholarship." He based his entire talk on the rabbinic saying (p.152) . This defined accurately Adler's function and spared Ginzberg the necessity of dressing up Adler in borrowed feathers. When I congratulated Ginzberg on his address, he remarked that he had worked hard on it. I can very well understand why.

Even the weather served us well. Although it had been threatening, the rain held off till the exercises were over. Fortunately they lasted only 1 hr. and 10 minutes -- a vast improvement on former years. Incidentally, even the introductory prayer which was given by Ph. Alstet was good.

In the evening I took part in the TI Alumni Dinner. That too was carried out with more dignity than usual. The class of 1915 figured prominently. But there was on the whole quite a poor representation of the large number of graduates. Finkelstein came in after the meal and left a little while after he spoke. He did not stay to hear me. Of course that annoyed me, but I am learning to control myself and not allow myself to be bothered by such trivialities.

He did make, however, a very good speech. I felt that what I had intended to say would have been too much along lines similar to those on which he spoke, so I gave an impromptu talk which was well received.

Tonight I attended the Suyim Hazman of the Friedlaender Classes. This time Finkelstein spoke briefly and stayed over to listen to me. I made use of what I had worked out today as the talk I am to give Shabuot morning at the SAJ services. I called it a Bible lesson on "How an ancient gangster people terrorized the world and finally broke its own neck" or "How God broke His own scourge." With Italy's declaring war today, thereby practically as President Roosevelt said this afternoon striking a dagger in her neighbor's back, I felt I had to address myself to the topic that was uppermost in everybody's mind. The analogy of Germany to ancient Assyria worked out very well, and I spoke it with verve. Everybody seemed pleased. Even F. deigned to express his satisfaction.

That I have managed to keep myself in hand and to carry out successfuly these days hard routine duties I attribute not to my power of will, but to my improved physical condition. I am almost rid of the pain in my hip joints or muscles, which lasted full two weeks. Even my hay fever is, with the exception of occasional sneezing fits which do not last long, very much under control, due to the regular and frequent inoculations I am getting, although the timothy grass pollen seems to be quite abundant this year.

If health is so important a factor in keeping a person well behaved, it deserves to be treated much more as a moral duty than it usually is.

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Tuesday, June 11, 1940

Death, the further off it seems, the better it is braved. This is why, other things being equal, health and courage go together.

When I came to the Seminary synagogue last Sabbath I knew that I would be given some honor connected with the reading of the Torah. The question arose in my mind what should I do in case I am called up. If I were to use the new version of the Torah benediction (p.153) instead of I would offend the congregation. On the other hand, if I reverted to the traditional benediction I would appear guilty of inconsistency. I had to make up my mind beforehand, so I decided to use the traditional form. But fortunately I was saved from compromising myself by being called up for the ceremony of raising the scroll. Whether it was a matter of chance, or whether Prof. Ginzberg who apportions the honors wanted to forestall embarrassment on anybody's part, I cannot tell. But I am surely grateful for the "mizvah" of "hagbaha."

Weinzberg, who has contributed a number of very fine pieces to the Reconstructionist, seems to be quite a talented writer. If in addition he had possessed common sense he would have been much better off than he is. At the meeting at my house which he attended last Thursday and which I had called to discuss the problem of a prayer anthology, practically the first statement he made was that the bulk of the prayers of the "Shir Hadash" isn't worth the paper it is printed on. Even if he actually believed that to be the truth -- which I don't think he does -- he should have realized that those most responsible for the publication of that book sat there with him. But apparently the desire to shock or to say some-

thing smart got the better of him and he could not keep it down.

A little while after the meeting was adjourned and everybody left, he telephoned that he wanted to see me again. When he came he told me about his difficulties in getting a teaching position that would give him enough to live on. He thinks he could be the head of a school and that he ought to earn about $5000.00. At present he teaches daily 2½ hours in Rabbi Weilerstein's school and reads the Torah. For that he gets $1800. I was glad to hear that he had no fault to find with either Weilerstein or the congregation. But, if it weren't for the above remark of his about the Shir Hadash I might really have imagined that he could be entrusted with the supervision of a school.

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Saturday night, June 22, 1940, Deal, N.J.

Yesterday we moved into the cottage we rented for the summer. It is located in Deal, N.J. on the S.E. corner of Norwood and Philip Aves. Ira, Judith and Miriam are with us.

On Wednesday the first day of Shabuot (June 12) I experienced one of my occasional reverses. The sermon was a flop. I tried to give the very same talk that had proved eminently successful the Monday night before. But something must have upset me. Perhaps it was the poor attendance due to the fact that many of the members were in other synagogues where their friends were having their children confirmed. Perhaps the unexpected presence of Henry Rosenthal whose hypercritical attitude has a disturbing effect on me. All I know is that the words I needed eluded me and the words that come to my tongue were the wrong ones. When I am under nervous tension I suffer a kind of attenuated aphasia which shows itslef in my forgetting names and in my failing to get the right word for the

thought I want to express. The present condition of the world is naturally the main cause of my nervous tension. But at times I manage to overcome it, especially when I find myself in genial surroundings. This is hardly the case at services at the SAJ. The unesthetic surroundings, the lack of proper musical rendition of the prayers or the Torah readings, the small numbers, all these things combine to depress me. And the result was the failure to put my sermon across.

The effect of such failure is to aggravate my nervous tension and to put me into a very black mood. It takes me some time to overcome that effect, depending on how soon I have the opportunity to redeem myself in my own estimation. I cannot say that up till now I have really redeemed myself, despite my having had one opportunity since then where I might have done so, if I had succeeded with it better than I did. That will be made clear in the sequel.

On Friday, June 14 4:00 P.M. I attended the meeting which took place in A. Dushkin's office for the purpose of straightening out the Dinin-Scharfstein controversy concerning the supervision of the experimental school which is to be subsidized by the Jewish Education Committee. The discussion ended in a draw.

Sunday June 16 I officiated at the wedding of Harriet Joy Liebovitz to Sheldon Bordon. Harriet Joy is the adopted daughter of Harry Liebovitz who is my mainstay at the SAJ. If not for his cooperation either I would have had to give up the SAJ or it would have gone out of existence altogether. I therefore felt that I must be in especially good form in the performance of the wedding ceremony. Fortunately I was.

The wedding took place at the Waldorf-Astoria. There were more than 300 guests. The extravagance of the affair at a time such as this was to me extremely jarring. As if to accentuate the incongruity of it, right after the ceremony word spread that France had capitulated. I am sure I was not the only one there to experience a sort of hollow feeling in the pit of the stomach. The dread of what is bound to come is beginning to weigh heavily on everybody's mind.

Special Summer Seminar

Fortunately in my own case the task of having to meet a group of Seminary men who had asked me to conduct with them a seminar and discussion group has enabled me to overcome the depressive feeling. The following were in the group: Gershon Chertoff, Winokur, Tenenbaum, Gerstein, Engel, Kreitman, Barish, Charney, Davis, Kieval. The first session was attended also by Sidney Greenberg. I took up with them Moore's "Origin and Growth of Religion" of which I covered the first 4 chapters. I spent one half of each session on that book and one hour on the discussion of the paper on "The Function of the Rabbi in American Jewish Life," which I expect to present at the convention of the Rabbinical Assembly in Detroit next week. I met with the group 4 times in the course of the week, June 17-21, omitting Wednesday. Both the men and I enjoyed the sessions and found them fruitful.

Darman

On Wednesday Lena and I went to Woonsocket to take part in the silver wedding anniversary of the Darmans. I have always regarded Darman as a high-minded, generous and loyal Jew who is a valuable asset to Jewish life. He has shown extraordinary friend-

ship toward the Israelis and me, and I have been anxious for an opportunity to reciprocate. When I was called up some time ago by the chairman of the arrangements committee and asked whether I would come, I accepted the invitation most eagerly.

The banquet was attended by a large and representative gathering. I have been asked to be the main speaker. While my address was well received, I know that I could have done much better. I would not regard it as good enough to redeem me in my own estimate.

I was very happy to note that both of Darman's children, his son Morton and his daughter Sivia, have turned out to be very intelligent and well mannered and cooperative with their parents in matters Jewish.

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Sunday, June 23, 1940 - Gordis

Monday afternoon (June 17) Dr. Gordis came to see me. I don't think I have recorded anything about him in this Journal thus far, but he is one of the dramatis personae of the Seminary Comedy (Comedia Divina). He is in my opinion the most brilliant graduate of the Seminary, not expepting even Milton Steinberg. He has pre-eminent ability both as a scholar and as a speaker and some excellent traits as a person. If it were not for a streak of pilpulism that yellows both his thinking and acting he would be almost a flawless kind of person. It is his capacity to think straight that I venture to say has led him to accept and even partly avow the Reconstructionist approach. But it is that pilpulistic streak which had led him to identify it with conservatism and on occasion to disavow Reconstructionism.

The object of his visit was to tell me about his being offered a Chicago pulpit and to get my advice as to whether he should accept it. The pulpit is occupied at present by a "free lance" a certain Daskell who has been with his congregation for the last 20 years. The congregation is aware that its growth is impeded by Daskell. They want to retire him on a pension and to get a better man in his place. They are anxious to get Gordis whom they are offering $8000.00.

Gordis described his situation at the Seminary as one that is uncertain, due to Finkelstein's desire to economize and to his tendency to prevaricate. Among the most recent antics of F. is that of acting as apologist for Christianity in general and the Catholic Church in particular vis a vis the Jews. On one occasion he broke out in anger against Gordis for some imaginary offense to Albright who had done Gordis an ill turn, and he accused Gordis of failing to turn his other cheek. When F. was about to invite a Catholic missionary to the Jews to participate in the inter-faith series of lectures, Gordis warned him not to do so. Instead of thinking Gordis for apprising him of the kind of person that Catholic priest was, he turned on him resentfully and excoriated him for suspecting innocent people.

When I asked Gordis how his wife felt about his making the change, he told me that she preferred to remain in N.Y. mainly because she has all her relatives here. I then saw no point in advising him to make the change. (I forgot to state in the preceding that at present he holds two positions: one as rabbi of a Long Island congregation, to which he gives most of his time and which pays him, I should judge about $6000. and the other is as lecturer in Bible which gives him $1000. There are two other men in the Seminary who teach Bible, H.L. Ginsberg and Sperber. Ginsberg

who gives all his time to the Seminary stands the best chance of attaining the professorship in Bible, which had always been Gordis' ultimate ambition. The one who is chiefly responsible for Ginsberg's ascession to the Seminary is Albright, according to whom Ginsberg is the most promising Jewish biblical scholar. From what Gordis says, Albright while trying to smoothen Ginsberg's path does everything to obstruct Gordis' chances. Albright went so far as to prevent three articles of Gordis' from appearing in the Journal of Biblical Studies. The fact that they were accepted immediately and without reservations by three other reputable magazines shows that it was not because they were not good enough that they had been turned down.)

The Board of Directors of the Reconstructionist Foundation is still in the process of being organized. I myself acted on the suggestion I made some time ago (see above, p.241 typescript) and succeeded in enlisting the cooperation of a number of women. In addition to Julia Dushkin, I got Bertha Schoolman, Dr.Krasnow and Essie Bernstein to join the Board. I also got Mr. Doniger to become a member of the Board. Besides Ira, I am the only one who has thus far done actual organizing of Reconstructionist personnel. Milton Steinberg has merely suggested a few names, but has done practically nothing to further the movement.

The Board met at Guzik's home last Monday night (June 17). It was a good meeting in that it helped to clarify the specific tasks which must be undertaken immediately.

Tuesday night I took part in the meeting of the SAJ Board of Trustees. I had not intended to be present but was led to do so because of the following incident: Around dinner time Joe Levy of the Crawford Stores called me up and asked me whether I had read the half page ad which had appeared in the morning N.Y. Times of that day, calling upon all Americans to organize, or as stated there "to outorganize Hitler." It was an anonymous appeal to save "Christian Civilization" from being destroyed by pagan civilization. Having given me a long speech on Sunday night at the Liebovitz wedding about the need of forgetting everything else and putting a moratorium on religion, Levy felt that this appeal expressed the same sentiments as he had uttered to me that night. In the course of his telephone conversation he kept on reiterating the same vague appeal to organize, and I kstp on asking him what he wanted me to do. In the course of the conversation he came out again with his statement about putting a moratorium on religion. I couldn't stand that kind of guff any longer and gave him to understand that I resented deeply that advice of his. I asked him how he would like me to say to him that he ought to stop making money and give himself over to helping the government organize against Hitler. He snapped back that I had actually said to him on Sunday night that capital would have to place itself at the disposal of the government.

Both of us, however, exercised self-control and instead of putting down our receivers abruptly we continued the conversation in calmer tone. I then said to him "If you mean business, why not come to the SAJ Board (whose meetings he hadn't attended the entire year) which was meeting that night and get them to do something in the name of the SAJ in answer to that appeal. Although I could ill afford to come I too would be present and help him carry through

whatever action he would suggest. My saying "if you mean business" ruffled him again, but he soon calmed down again.

Both of us came to the meeting which took place at Jacob Levy's home on 267 Central Park West. Levy's suggestion in a highly modified form was acted upon.

Since I was present at the meeting I myself brought up the suggestion which I had asked Ira to present to the Board. For a long time I felt that we made a mistake in not having adopted the Confirmation ceremony. I was always prejudiced against it because it had been taken over almost bodily from Christianity. But when I realixed how much of an incentive it can be for young people to engage in Jewish studies when they can be best understood and appreciated, I made up my mind to overcome my prejudice and to recommend its adoption. After all, do I not all the time maintain that we Jews have taken over some of the most important beliefs and practices from other religions? Of course it is much harder to do that knowingly. But even that aspect of the taking over has a place in my program of what we ought to do. Somehow I never got around to getting the SAJ to act formally on the question of Confirmation. The meager attendance on the 1st day Shabuot services finally decided me to bring up the question of Confirmation at the next meeting of the SAJ Board. When I presented the suggestion last Tuesday everybody was heartily in favor of it.

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Saturday, June 29, 1940

Last Monday night I attended a meeting under the auspices of the Jewish Education Committee at 1776 Broadway for the purpose of formally completing the negotiations pertaining to the demonstration school at Temple Ansche Chesed. The JEC was represented by Mark Eisner, chairman, Semel, Hendricsk and Dushkin; the Temple

Ansche Chesed by Leon Kohn, Krakower, the administrator of the school and Cohen, the president of the Temple, and I represented the Teachers Institute. Chipkin could speak for the JEC and the TI.

ANSCHE CHESED SCHOOL AS TI PRACTICE SCHOOL

Dushkin opened the proceedings by pointing out that the school would experiment with a new kind of curriculum, one based not on the traditional subject matter, but on integration of various subject matter into civits centering about the various relationships of the child such as those in the home, the community, the nation, mankind and the cosmos. My contribution consisted in pointing out that the school would try to develop into a model congregational school of the conservative type. Knowing that they were interested in helping the various groups in Jewish life to develop the kind of school best fitted to conduct their respective types of education, I asked them to subsidize the Ansche Chesed school to the amount of $5000 which Dushkin had suggested.

Eisner and Semel expressed approval and indicated that they looked to the demonstration school to solve the most important and most difficult problem in Jewish education, that of evolving the proper kind of curriculum.

That same night I left for Detroit together with Ira to attend the convention of the Rabbinical Assembly. We got there Tuesday noon and drove directly to the Synagogue Shaarey Zedek where all the sessions of the convention took place. That synagogue had been rebuilt quite recently -- I believe about six years ago -- and contains magnificent accommodations for worship, school and social activities. The congregation Shaarey Zedek has been in existence over 70 years and includes among its members a considerable number of

well-to-do Jews who come from intensely Jewish homes and had been brought up to place a high value on Jewish knowledge. This accounts for their being neo-orthodox and for the hold which Rabbi Hirschman has on them. He is a man of about my age who came to this country after I did after having gotten something of a Yeshivah training. He has been with the congregation for over thirty years. At present it has a membership of nearly 700 families with a Sunday school attendance of about 1100. Of that number only between 50 and 75 attend the week day Hebrew school. The younger people had been clamoring for years that Hirschman should get an assistant, because they were out of sympathy with his intransigance in the matter of Jewish belief and practice, and wanted to be served by a man who was more modern minded. This, however, was not the avowed reason for their demanding that the congregation get an assistant rabbi. Hirschman, on the other hand, has been inveterably opposed to having an assistant imposed on him. Finally he had to yield, and Morris Adler, one of the more recent Seminary graduates, and a very able young man is now assistant. Although Adler has been there only one year, the two rabbis are already at loggerheads. When I asked Hershman how Adler was working out, he said to me that a congregation has no right to be so big as to require more than one rabbi.

Tuesday afternoon papers were presented by Morris Adler, Armond Cohen and David Goldstein on the rabbi and the community. Armand Cohen discussed his particular phase of the subject -- the Center and the Synagogue -- in the spirit of Reconstructionism. Simon Greenberg could not let such outspoken approval of Reconstructionism go unchallenged. He took exception to Cohen's suggestion that the community ought to take under its wing both the synagogue and the center. In the course of his remarks he made the statement

that the only way rabbis can get money for Jewish activities is by influencing rich Jews to give. To illustrate his point he mentioned the fact that the new hospital which was being erected in Philadelphia will in all likelihood make provision for kashrut, because the president of the hospital was a member of his congregation. I used this very example afterwards to illustrate what I meant by the statement that the rabbi was functioning in a void, since he had to resort to "shtadlamit" to achieve his Jewish objectives and had no democratic base to build on.

In the evening a public meeting took place in the main auditorium of the synagogue and was addressed by Israel M. Goldman of Providence and Finkelstein. Godlman gave a well worked out, though lengthy address, on the Seminary. Finkelstein was supposed to speak on Adler. What he told about Adler was quite interesting, though it gave a highly idealized picture of the man. But then he digressed into an analysis of the present world situation, the danger in which civilization found itself and what the Seminary proposes to do in order to save civilization. In the meantime it hasn't enoughfunds to keep even the museum open. In the course of his ranting he let drop a remark from which I gather on what pretext he bases his opposition to the group of educators like Dushkin, Chipkin, etc. to whom Goldman had referred as the products of the Teachers Institute. That remark was that it is not enough to evolve the methodology of Jewish education. The Seminary will undertake to produce content. From that point he expatiated on such important work as the inter-faith courses and the proposed council of 80 scientists, philosophers who will meet on Sept. 9. The truth is that in his eagerness to get financail support for the Seminary, F. is resorting to all kinds of sensational and spectacular methods that may appeal to certain rich Jews who have no interest in furthering Jewish life as such.

But by methods such as these he is catering to and reenforcing the lowest standards of Jewish life and neglecting the intrinsic values which it ought to be the business of the Seminary to foster. It is interesting though saddening to see how he tries, by working himself up into a frenzy, to get himself to believe in this kind of sensationalsim as not only justifiable but as indispensable to the salvation of the Seminary.

Wednesday morning and part of the afternoon were devoted to the discussion of the rabbi's function in the congregation. The particular aspects dealt with were preaching, arranging the order of worship and influencing the home, from the standpoint of modern life and thought. Ira read an excellent paper on "Preaching Modern Religion." Elia A. Bohnen, one of the discussants of the paper, frankly said that he was troubled by the fact that he had no definite conception of God, though he was in quest of such a conception. The frankness was to me refreshing but the fact was discouraging. Morris Silverman read a good paperon "Vitalizing Public Worship" but the one by Eugene Kohn on that subject was much better. Henry Fisher, the second discussant, challenged the value of improved techniques when the very reality of God as an entity was being questioned. While admitting that he was not asking us to recover the belief in an anthropomorphic deity, of the kind that his mother who prays devoutly believes in, he said he was at a loss what to advise in order that we might worship in the same spirit as did our ancestors. William P. Greenfield read a paper on the home. He likewise was challenged for not going to the root of the matter and failing to realize that the Jewish home is merely sharing the general disintegration of the home. All in all I was pleased both by the specific nature of the suggestions as to what may be done to improve the activities of the rabbi

and by the repeated challenge to them on the ground that they failed to reckon with the more fundamental causes of what was wrong with those activities.

In the evening I listened to Herman Hailperin's M. D. Levine Memorial lecture in Hebrew on "Intellectual Relations between Christian and Jew in Europe with Special Reference to Rashi and Nicolas de Lyra." Though what he said was rather commonplace, it was expressed in a clear style and articulate diction. When I recall what a poor opinion I had of him and of his intellectual attainments when he started on his career in the rabbinate, I am gratefully happy for the sake of Jewish life to note such vast improvement in some of the men entrusted with conserving it.

Boaz Cohen's report of the Committee on Jewish Law did not create a good impression on those present. (There were fewer members of the Assembly and more strangers than at the day sessions.) The main spirit of the report may be summed up by the morte "non possumus."

Thursday morning came my turn. This was the best attended session of the entire convention, except, of course, the public one of Tuesday night. For once I delivered an important address with perfect ease despite the presence of unfriendly critics, disarming the latter and making new friends for the cause of Reconstructionism. The fact that I spoke extemporaneously illustrated the most important points by references to what had come up in the discussion of the two preceding days and in general integrated the various papers into an organic unity enabled me to hold the interest of the hearers for an hour and a half and to convey to them the basic principle of Reconstructionism. If I had come with a prepared address I would probably not have had the courage to make explicit reference to Reconstructionism. But I noted throughout the discussions of the preceding days that the speakers found themselves compelled to use the term "recon-

struction" again and again. Each time the word was mentioned there was a rustle of comment, I then realized as I had never before what an excellent term I happened to have chosen for our movement. From the advertiser's standpoint nothing is so valuable as having the name of the product he is trying to sell creep frequently into discourse. Not being bound to a manuscript I capitalized on what I had heard in the course of the discussions of the various papers that had been presented. I made use especially of Greenberg's remark that we Jews lack the power of taxation to prove my point about the rabbinate's functioning in a void, and of Lang's insistence upon dealing with the individual Jew to get him to want to be a Jew, to indicate that this was exactly what Reconstructionism stood for. Reconstructionism, I pointed out, differs from the existing movements in Jewish life in urging that the problems of readjustment which the rabbi has to solve as social engineer, educator and theologgian be dealt with not by the rabbis alone but by them cooperatively with the laity. Only by getting the laity to understand those problems and accept responsibility for their solution will Jewish life succeed in finding a place for itself in the modern world.

Greenberg again rose to speak, this time, however, not to take issue with what I had said but to say that he had found himself in greater agreement with me than ever before and to explain what he himself described as his "unfortunate" statement about working through the rich. Finkelstein naturally had to register that he differed with me theologically in reference to my definition of God not as entity but as process and socially in that he would rather stress the reconstruction of the world in which we live rather than the reconstruction of Jewish life. He did, however, approve wholeheartedly my suggestion that the Seminary give its students a basic three years' training in the subject matter of the Jewish heritage, and a two years' special professional training either in synagogue activities, social welfare, Zionist work, etc. so as to have men with a rabbinic background qualified to go into various phases of administrative work in the Jewish community.

My address was interrupted by a demented woman who was suffering from a religious mania. At first she was quieted down. But after I was through she insisted on delivering a tirade and she made a scene. I asked Hirschman to give us another room. When we got there we listened to David Aronson review of Epstein" "The Agunah" and recommendation as to the next step. Of all the traditionalists in the Assembly he is the most sensible and witty. His paper was excellent. I moved the acceptance of his recommendation. Hirschman wanted to obstruct it but did not succeed.

There were about twelve of us on the train that left for New York that evening. Among them were Finkelstein, Israel M. Goldman, Louis Levitsky, Boxer, Adler, Burnstine, Harry Halpern and others. We interchanged funny stories, "davened" Maariv in one of the compartments and listened later to the voting of the Republican Convention that was being held at Philadelphia. The only serious matter we touched on that evening was the organization of adult classes to be conducted under the auspices of the Seminary. Gold man had been appointed by Finkelstein to organize the work.

In the morning Finkelstein and I chatted about what he had said with regard to reconstructing the world. I tried to explain to him that it was impossible to think of reconstructing Jewish life without at the same time reconstructing to some extent the general environment in which we lived. It seems to me that he is too much obsessed with his practical objectives to think clearly on any subject, especially one which calls for a thorough grounding in the fundamentals of sociology and philosophy. Later while talking about the reluctance of our graduates to go to remote places where their services are highly needed he mentioned what President Roosevelt had said to him about settling refugee Jews in the different South American countries. The governments there feared that Jews might isolate

themselves and try to build up an "imperium in unperio." Roosevelt was therefore pleased to hear from Finkelstein that he had suggested to the JDC to send rabbis to these new Jewish communities to help them adjust themselves to the new conditions under which they had to live and to become integrated into the general population. "What I fear," said Finkelstein, to me, "is Jewish isolationism." Does he really believe that I am an isolationist, or does he merely want to believe that about me in order to feel justified in combating whatever influence I might have over the graduates? It seems that he and Cyrus Adler must have talked with each other into believing that about me. It is quite apparent that he has, out of gratitude to Adler for having made him president of the Seminary, allowed Adler's spirit and way of thinking take full possession of him. This is how he has grown into the part of the typical pious assimilationist.

As for my own part in the convention, I am glad to record that I have managed to carry it through with complete satisfaction to myself from every point of view. It has given me greater confidence in myself and in the graduates of the Seminary and has added to my sense of security in the Seminary vis a vis Finkelstein.

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Sunday, June 30, 1940

This morning I went to New York to deliver the lecture on "The Religions vs. the Philosophic Approach to the Belief in God" before the Summer Institute of the Jewish Institute of Religion. All I did was to use part of the address I had given at Pittsburgh before the National Council for Jewish Education on May 23. I was surprised to find quite a large group of people taking part in the seminar. Most of the participants work quite hard during the academic year and one would imagine that on a fine June morning like today's they would relax. But apparently most professionals are eager and ambitious to

advance ~~kx~~ in their callings. It is good to see that those engaged in Jewish work also take their calling quite seriously.

I had in the audience Prof. and Mrs. Ellbogen and Prof. Spiegel. They complimented me on my address. I gave only the part that dealt with the conception of God. That took me about an hour and a quarter. The questions were too few for me to judge how the audience reacted. The reason for the limited number of questions was that there was another lecture immediately following mine.

In going over the material I lectured on this morning I had occasion to bring out a new and very important point. I drew a distinction between the belief in God on the one hand and the conception of God or the God idea on the other. The former I described as the articulation of the will to life abundant and as analogous to the forms which Kant ascribed to the mind; the latter I described as the particular idea of the Power that makes for salvation, which is determined by the level of cultural and social development and as analogous to the content of thought.

In the afternoon a meeting to discuss the demonstration school of the TI took place at my house. Present were Dushkin, Chipkin, Dinin, Edidin, Krakower, Leon Kohn, Hershon, Rabbi Zeitlin of the Anshe Chesed congregation and I. We discussed the initial steps to be taken in the organization of the school. The first step is the organization of an administrative committee which is to be responsible for the financial conduct of the school. The next step will be the engaging of a staff of teachers. We plan to retain some of those who have been teaching hitherto in the school and to take on one or two additional teachers. I also stated that I would like to have the SAJ religious school merge with the contemplated demonstration

school. All who were present thought well of the idea. It will have to be presented to the Trustees of the SAJ. I hope they will approve.

* * *

Monday, July 8, 1940

The greater part of last week I spent writing up the talk I had given at the Rabbinical Assembly Convention on "The American Rabbi in the Modern World." I got through only with the first draft which amounted to over 13,000 words.

This morning I went to the city to take the innoculation against the hay fever and then to attend two meetings. The first was a Seminary Faculty meeting. The main topic of discussion was what to do with a number of first year men who should not have been admitted in the first place. That meeting lasted from 11:00 to 12:30.

The second meeting was the one called by Finkelstein to consider the organization of the "National Academy for Adult Study under the auspices of the Jewish Theol. Sem." The chairman of the committee is Israel M. Goldman of Providence. I took an active part in the discussion and made some suggestions which were adopted. The general idea is to have a three years' course consisting of twenty two hour sessions each year. The subject matter is to consist of Hebrew, History, Jewish Literature and Religion.

When Israel M. Goldman asked F. how much money the Seminary was willing to contribute toward the project F. didn't commit himself but suggested that the Seminary might advance $500. Assuming there would be a system of registration of $1.00 to be paid at the beginning of each year and that 50 cents would go to the central bureau, one thousand students would bring in another $500. In fact I am not sure

whether F. didn't have in mind the registration fee itself as the Seminary's contribution. I could see that all that F. is interested in is the advertising value for the Seminary, and for that he is willing to have the Seminary advance the pittance mentioned. He couldn't be thinking seriously that with that amount it would really be possible to organize such a large undertaking. Postage alone would practically require that amount.

Three times each year I send in a report to the President of the Seminary on the work of the Teachers Institute and Israel Friedlaender Classes. The latter report is sent to me by Chipkin and I append to the TI report. The June report this year was the first one addressed to F. In acknowledging the receipt he added a number of questions about the Friedlaender Classes which he wanted Chipkin to answer. The questions were many in number calling for all sorts of statistics about the students, their attendance, marks, examinations and also about the IF Faculty, the number of meetings held, etc. I referred these questions to Chipkin, but I could see at once that F was out for some mischief. Sure enough I was right in my guess. The other day I received word from Chipkin that he had had a long interview with F and that he wanted to tell me about it. Today I waited to see Chipkin to get from him the account of the interview.

In brief this is what F said to him. Did Kaplan tell you of my suggestion about the TI that the Jewish Education Committee ought to take it over? K. turned it down. But how about the IF Classes? I can use my influence with the other members of the JEC to get them to take it over. (The very words he had used with me about the TI).

"But," interposed Ch., "apart from the fact that the JEC could not take over the classes without violating the principle of treating all groups alike?"

"I can't see any difference between the TI, the Yeshiva Teachers Institute and the Herzliah. I received my training in all three kinds," answered ".

"But should not the fact that the IF Classes have been part of the Seminary for 20 years, and that they are a means of memorializing Friedlaender's sacrifice for Judaism be taken into account? After all there is a great deal of sentiment involved in all this," Ch. said.

"That shouldn't stand in the way," F. replied. "As for sentiment, Friedlaender didn't die for the Seminary. He died for the JDC". What I suppose he meant was that the community and not the Seminary ought to memorialize Friedlaender's name. But whatever he meant, only a heartless brute could talk like that.

Apparently he is having a hard time meeting the Seminary budget. Either he or someone among the Seminary trustees is responsible for the contemplated investigation into the way the Seminary is conducted. The suggestion was made that Teachers College be asked to appoint the investigating committee. That was how the Graduate School for Jewish Social Work began to be sabotaged. But F. said that he would try to carry through that investigation himself. If what he did would not prove satisfactory he would ask Teachers College to undertake it. At least that is the story he told Ch. in explanation for his asking Ch. to give him all those statistics about the Friedlaender Classes.

I am very much afraid that the comparative peace of mind which I enjoyed in the Seminary hitherto belongs to an era that is past. This man F. is a trouble maker.

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Tuesday, July 9, 1940

Sam M. Cohen consulted me yesterday on a problem which he has been working on viz"How do the Rabbis Themselves Regard their Rabbinic Function?"

Of late I have made considerable headway in my thinking on religion. The following thoughts on the subject should prove fruitful:

Toward a Science of Soterics

Whatever truth there may be to Kant's distinction between the form and the content of thought, epistemologically, there is in it an important psychological truth. Psychologically all conation necessarily implies movement in a specific direction of which the mind (the totality of will, thought and emotion) becomes aware, usually as a result of some obstacle which obstructs the movement. Awareness is a kind of converted "movement-in-a-specific-direction," analogous to heat which results from collision of two objects. The converted "movement-in-a-specific-direction" of the will or conation may be regarded as the form which the cognition assumes. As a result of the functioning of the imagination (which may be considered as the constellation of cognitive acts) that form is progressively filled with content.

The foregoing distinction, viewed psychologically, between the form and content of thought should prove helpful in understanding the nature and development of religion. In keeping with that distinction, we should distinguish in religion the belief in God from the idea or conception of God. The belief in God is congitive form, the conception of God is cognitive content. As form, the belief in God is the constant factor in all the manifestations of religion. As content, the conception of God is the variable factor in religion, which varies with the level of social and intellectual development.

The belief in God is the cognitive form of the movement of the human will in the direction of deliverance or salvation. God as the object of religious belief is therefore the Power that makes for salvation.

The conception of God is the particular thought content which is put into the three elements of the belief in God: 1) the Power, 2) that makes for 3) salvation. At once we come upon an important fact about the conception or idea of God, viz: that it is not merely a conception of a Power, without at the same time being a conception of 3) salvation and of ~~what~~ what 2) makes for it. The attempt to formulate a conception of God independently of our conception of the two other terms is like trying to define a person's character apart from any situations in which that person had a chance to display it.

The psychological order in which the three elements of the belief in God take on content is first "salvation" then "makes-for" and finally "God."

Salvation in its elementary aim of deliverance from some evil becomes an object of awareness as soon as some desire is obstructed and the imagination, becoming active, envisages the thwarted objective. All thwarted desire is a form of evil. It is in the nature of pain to focus the entire mentality of the living being upon the actual or putative cause of the pain. When we have a festering hangnail, we find it difficult to keep our minds upon our most important affairs, for at that time our entire being is centered upon the hangnail and the wish to be relieved of the pain it causes. This centering of his entire being upon some focal point results in the case of man (whose memory retains strong impressions of these frequent states of obsession) in awareness of selfhood. Likewise, the desired relief, becoming associated with the whole of one's being or self, it becomes for the time being synonimous with self-fulfillment, to which everything is for the

nonce subordinated. We then have as the first step in the psychological process of the breaking up of the experience of the will to deliverance or salvation, the emergence simultaneously of the self as the subject of that deliverance or salvation.

The next psychological step is the awareness of conditions as "making for" that deliverance. In our eagerness to be relieved of what is troubling us we "attack" whatever causes us the pain. How we "attack" it depends evidently upon what we identify as the conditions upon which our salvation depends.

But as little as we find it possible to attend to the source of the evil without bringing our whole self to bear on it, i.e. without becoming aware of self, so little do we find it possible to attend to the conditions which are regarded as capable of removing the evil without becoming aware of a power behind them, a power in whom or in which the conditions that make for deliverance or salvation receive their unity. Thus by the same token that the awareness of the want of salvation leads to the emergence of selfhood the awareness of the existence of conditions that make for the attainment of salvation leads to the emergence of godhood. The Power that makes for salvation is thus the necessary complement to the self which is the subject of salvation. This accounts for the recognition, in time, of the possession by man and God of a nature inherently common to both. Thus the emergence of the belief in a Power or powers constitutes the third psychological step in the breaking up of the experience of the will to salvation.

The history of religion is the history of the various types of content projected into each of the three elements of the belief in God viz: 1) salvation, 2) make-for and 3) Power.

At this point there should be anthropological material arranged in the order of the social and intellectual progress to illustrate the development in the conceptions of salvation, of what makes for it, and of the Power behind what makes for it.

In Jewish religion salvation is conceived as sharing Israel's ultimate destiny (Israel) by fulfilling the conditions that make for it (Torah) the author of which is God the Creator of the world.

In Budhism salvation is conceived as deliverance from self, by the practice of Yoga. The third element is left unfilled. Thus proving that the most determining element of the three in religious belief is the element of salvation.

Until modern times in the western world salvation was regarded as immortality of the soul and bliss in the hereafter, the conditions that make for it as residing in the tradition of some supernaturally revealed law or person, and the Power who is author of that revelation as a quasi-human being.

Nowadays there is confusion as to how to conceive salvation. The most plausible conception of it is that of contributing toward the establishment of a world in which there would obtain a synthesis of the maximum of individuality with the maximum of cooperation. The conditions making for it should be conceived as a progressive knowledge of human life and its natural environment and the utilization of that knowledge to achieve the salvation of individual and society. God should be conceived as a cosmic process analogous to human selfhood. As process God's nature is one, but polar is character, harboring the evil which it is forever seeking to overcome and destroy. (Incidentally, this is what Kabbalah also taught. This is the first time that I find myself subscribing to the traditional conception of God as the author of both good and evil. Hitherto I conceived of God as identical with the good only.)

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Wednesday, July 10, 1940

To arrive at a working conception of God for our day, we should first arrive at a clear understanding of what is to constitute for us salvation. How shall we go about formulating a satisfactory conception of salvation? Two factors enter into the formulation, one is what we want, the other is what is possible. In ancient times when people had no notion of natural law and regarded all existence as caused by personal and purposive will, anything that was wanted was considered possible. Thus since the human being wanted to live forever and since he had no conception of death as inherent in the nature of things, he conceived of salvation as consisting of immortality. This world seldom if ever proved satisfactory. The mere fact that man wanted another and better world for his abode was considered sufficient reason for its ultimate realization. From these premises it followed naturally that man's true destiny lay beyond this world of space and time in some eternal realm that was unmarred by sin and suffering.

Nowadays, however, the notion of fixed laws in the physical and mental aspects of reality have become so integral a part of our thinking that we have learned to resign ourselves to this world of space and time as the only one in which the human being will have to achieve salvation if he can achieve it all. It is much more difficult to formulate a conception of this worldly salvation than it ever could be to formulate one of other-worldly salvation. The reason is evident. Besides having to be specific, where the other-worldly conception could afford to be vague, a conception of this worldly salvation that would satisfy all and sundry is very hard to arrive at. In fact it must be so formulated as to allow considerable latitude for a variety of tastes. Tentatively the following conception seems plausible:

Salvation for the modern minded individual would be the conviction that human society will ultimately be redeemed from at least the major evils which have their origin in human nature as well as to a large extent from those which are the concomitant of physical nature, and the feeling that our life has made some contribution, however modest, to such a consummation. What are the major evils which are remediable, and what are the goods which would result from their elimination? These are by no means easy questions to answer. We must remember that the elimination of one evil might lead to another. Let us say that human beings have finally eliminated war and have achieved a method of settling international disputes analogous to that used in settling disputes between individuals. There is plenty of injustice rampant in the world despite the fact that individuals resort to litigation instead of to duelling. What guarantee is there that for every evil that is eliminated another might not come in its place?

Besides, the elimination of evil by itself is not sufficient to constitute salvation. For life to be truly worthwhile it must yield some positive satisfactions. What shall they be? Tentatively I might suggest the following: maximum of self-expression plus maximum of cooperation in the various social relationships through which we function. Maximum self-expression presupposes health both physical and mental which accompanies the satisfaction of the needs for food, shelter and/sex experience. It also presupposes adequate opportunity for work and play, the adequateness depending upon the native capacities of the person. Maximum cooperation implies the development of satisfactory relations based on love, mutual respect, etc. in all dealings with other persons from the most intimate to the most distant.

Assuming that the foregoing is a feasible kind of salvation, we must not only have a general faith in its ultimate achievement

but we must also correlate it with the actualities of the world we live in. We must identify the possibilities which inhere in human society and which have in them the making of the salvation we strive for.

There was a time when it was believed that if man would master the difficulties presented by the physical environment, if he could produce enough for his physical wants in the way of food and shelter, the basic reason for his being forever at war with his neighbor would be removed. But we now realize that the vast progress man has achieved technologically has rendered his life less secure and happy. This very technological progress has made man his own most dangerous enemy. Human nature, despite all the teaching and moralizing has not become one whit better and kindlier. If anything it has become more cruel and calculating in its viciousness. The deliberate use of propaganda and deceit on as large and unashamed a scale as it is resorted to nowadays could hardly have been contemplated in the past.

But if we believe in the existence of a Power that makes for salvation, we assume that there is meaning and direction to the course of human events, that human nature despite its being dominated by forces that seem to have little to do with salvation is made to bring man nearer to the fulfillment of the better and worthier possibilities that are in him. This is the belief which finds expression in the statement that Judaism has taught man to behold God in history. That is to say. the Jews discerned in the tangle of human affairs a movement in the direction of salvation conceived in ethical and not merely naturalistic terms. But in ascribing to human affairs such meaning or direction, they always insisted that it was injected in those affairs by a superhuman Power and not derived from the human agents themselves. Humanism which became particularly articulate

during the last century refused to countenance this notion that whatever meaning human life and history possessed, they owed it to a source other than human. Comte and Hegel tried to prove that rationality was inherent in human history. Progress came to be regarded as inevitable. The last three decades have opened our eyes to the primeval chaos in which human life is still involved, and the apparent hopelessness of man's ever achieving genuine salvation by dint of his own natural powers and abilities. No wonder that we have with us thinkers like Barth, Berdiçyev and their disciples who maintain that the divine element in human affairs, which compels them to make for man's salvation does not derive from them but is superior posed as them. In other words God is not within society but transcends it.

According to this new transcendentalism, the meaning which human affairs assume by being regarded as constituting history instead of as a medley, is that which the will to live ascribes to human affairs as an act of faith and not as a logical inference from those affairs themselves. As a matter of fact, logical deduction would be inclined to interpret human affairs as meaningless by very reason of their being treated as having meaning. For one of the most discouraging facts about human life is that it is weighted down by history, by habits and traditions and prejudices which derive their sanction from the mere circumstance that they have a long history. How much more readily human life would adjust itself to changing circumstances if it were not bound by the shackles of history and tradition! If despite that tendency we can still believe that history has meaning, i.e. that human affairs are making for man's salvation, it is because our will-to-live is such as to necessitate the existence of a Power that transcends human affairs, and that superimposes his will upon them thereby compelling them to make for the salvation of man.

(I never would have believed that I would find myself accepting the Barthian conception of God. Not so long ago when I read one of his books, I was literally repelled by his presentation. Yet as I try to think the problem through I find myself compelled to subscribe to the conception of God as essentially transcendent.)

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Friday, July 12, 1940

Despite what I said in the last item about the inadequacy of the negative aspect of salvation, i.e. salvation as deliverance from evil, further reflection leads me to believe that inherently in the very notion of being saved or delivered the predominant element is not attaining some good but escaping some evil. God, therefore, or the Power that makes for salvation is the Power that helps man overcome evil. The conception of God is therefore determined by what man conceives as preeminently evil. We would have a better understanding of the history of religion if we made a careful study of what human beings in the different stages of their development considered as the cardinal evil or evils. Not only would we thus gain an itemized list of the different things human beings have regarded as evil, but we would realize that the human imagination plays an important role not only in conjuring up unwarranted fears of what are actually evils but also in representing as evil things that are really not evil. We shall also discover that many evils are considered so good as to constitute salvation.

In Christianity, eg. the cardinal evils were sin and death. To be delivered from them constituted salvation. The entire Christ mythology revolves about these two evils. By an empirical kind of mental association the two evils came to be regarded as inherently related to each other, because they are both phenomena of the body.

It is the body that disintegrates at death. It is the body that impels one to commit sin, for by sin they meant specifically illicit sex relations and later came to regard all sex relations (concupiscence) as sin. Hence Christianity regarded sin as the cause of death. God as Christ, redeemed man from sin and death. The reason, incidentally, the theology which made Christ entirely identical with God won over all other theologies which tried to differentiate between God and Christ and to give Christ an inferior status, is that theologians like Athanasius, Ambrose, etc. ultimately felt that God was essentially the Power that makes for salvation. To treat Christ as distinct from God is to introduce the philosophic connotation of the term "God" which was originally that of a generic term like man, to designate the godhood in the species of beings known as gods.

Neither in early Jewish religion nor in the other religions of mankind -- outside the mystery religions which treated death as the cardinal evil but not sin -- were sin and death regarded as cardinal evils. They did not constitute the main objectives of a god's redeeming function. In early Jewish religion the cardinal evils were enemies, famine, pestilence (cf. the choice put before David after he counted the Israelites). Enemies meant exile or death by the sword. Famine and pestilence meant the torment of physical pain. God as savior or deliverer warded off all three. Where did the Christians get the notion that sin and death were the cardinal evils? I have a hunch that they got it from Hindu philosophy through the medium of the Pythogoreans and the neo-Platonists. As far as I can gather Hindu philosophy derives from the following kind of empirical association of ideas. In becoming aware of our will to live we become aware of sin and suffering. In other words sin and suffering are not mere qualities of life which can with effort be removed from it. They are the very ingredients of life. Hence the cardinal evil is

life itself, from which we want to be redeemed and to attain Nirvena. In this repudiation of life there is no dualism between body and spirit. Insofar as they are still alive they are enduring evil. Our striving should be to emancipate themselves from life as such. According to Hindu reasoning, immortality would be the greatest punishment that could be inflicted on any living being. As it is every living being has sinned sufficiently to have to go through a cycle of existences until it is rid of all existence.

When this Hindu philosophy reached the western mind it could not be accepted fortwith in its entirety. The reason probably is that the western man managed to get more out of life than did the Hindu and was too much in love with it to declare it the cardinal evil. In fact he so loved it that he wanted to live forever. Evil was not inherently part of life, but separable from it. Hence to be redeemed meant to have life eternal that is freed from the sin and suffering that mar it. But they went one step further in their reasoning. They tried to answer the question: If evil is not an inherent part of life, how does it happen to be so ubiquitous? The answer was: the involvement of life in the body accounts for the evil of sin and suffering (death). All that the Hindus had said about life as a whole was thus imputed to the body, and a sharp dualism was set up between body and spirit which Paul exploited and made the basis of Gentile Christianity in opposition to Jewish Christianity which still operated with ~~xkk~~ what had universally been regarded as evils viz enemies, famine and pestilence.

In dealing with the problem of the conditions that make for salvation, it is necessary to bear in mind that while, on the whole, these are determined by the general level of intellectual and social development, the particular notion we have of what constitutes cardinal

evil contributes materially to the level of that development although the reverse has by now rightly become a truism, i.e. that the general ?(p.172) determines notion of evil. When e.g. man accept the notion that life as such is irredeemably bad, they naturally do nothing to increase their knowledge of reality nor try to use knowledge for the purpose of mastering environment. The immediate result of such efforts would be a more intense will to live, and hence should be prevented. The mass of Hindus did not actually live by the Buddhist philosophy. That is why they acquired considerable knowledge, art, etc. For that phase of their life they resorted to their traditional religion Buddhism as a sort of popular philosophy, generally aspired to by the many, but lived up to by few. When, as in the case of western mankind the body as such was considered the seat of evil and not life as a whole, a vast complex of ideas concerning the condition of salvation was evolved to correspond with this dualism. The universe which had in the past always been peopled with invisible beings like angels, demons, etc. was thenceforth conceived as divided between those beings which belonged to the same category as man's body, and which were responsible for all its sin and suffering and the beings of light, who shared none of the attributes of matter and were therefore not only free themselves from the evils that beset men but were ready to aid them in their efforts at self-liberation.

The modern man might in a moment of disgust and despair curse life roundly and equal the Hindu in the condemnation of it. Yet it would never occur to him as it did to Schopenhauer to condemn it unqualifiedly. He knows too much to what extent evil can be mitigaged at will. He would therefore be inclined to view life as inherently neutral. However involved it may be in evils they are not considered part of its essence, but merely accidental modes of it. Here, of course, it is the level of general development that

determines the notion of cardinal evil, and not the reverse. On the other hand, the fact that nowadays new evils have come to be regarded as cardinal serves as impetus to the fostering of means and conditions of salvation which have either not been identified hitherto as such or have not existed at all.

What to the modern man are the cardinal evils? Insecurity, disease. It would not be altogether correct to speak of poverty as a cardinal evil. When poverty, as in the case of monasticism does not involve insecurity, it is indeed welcomed as a good. But insecurity which has increased as a result of the fluctuations in the economic life of mankind is certainly dreaded by the majority of human beings. As for disease, there is nothing new in regarding it as evil, but the increased knowledge of medicine has made the fear of disease an obsession with most people. An evil which may be termed "emergent" in that it is gradually coming to be recognized as such, by no means without resistance on the part of many who either accept it as neutral or even as a good, is slavery. In the crude sense of buying and selling human beings as though they were chattels, slavery is considered formally as an evil. But in its disguised forms such as unquestioning submission to authority whether of those who speak in their own name or in the name of some tradition, or being dependent upon the arbitrary will of others for one's economic or social well being, slavery is far from being considered a cardinal evil. In fact the breakdown of democracy has led many to regard such submission to authority a veritable good. Catholicism definitely goes so far as to make blind submission to authority a high merit and prerequisite to salvation.

Another such emergent evil is war. The fact that democracy is inclined to treat war as an evil has placed the so-called democratic nations at a disadvantage in the world today which sees the rising star of Germany and Italy because they have inculcated in their

people the notion that war is not only not an evil but a good and a means to salvation. It was by means of a similar attitude toward war that Mohammed conquered the greater part of the civilized world in his day. In my book on "The Meaning of God in Modern Jewish Religion" where I have much to say about God as the Power that makes for freedom, I have nothing to say about His being the Power that makes for freedom from war. It would be entirely untrue to the spirit of the Jewish tradition to say that it regarded war as a cardinal evil. The same applies to Christianity. The emergence of war as a cardinal evil is the product of the modern realization that mankind is one and dependent upon the abolition of international war. The inference which Neitzsche drew from Darwin's thesis of the universal struggle for existence is wrong because the thesis itself has been shown by Kropotkin to be in large part wrong.

The point at which the metaphysical aspects of the Power that makes for salvation cannot be evaded is the circumstance that it takes the evils of insecurity, disease, slavery and war to impel man to produce the conditions that make for their elimination. It takes evil to produce good. Thus from the side of evil, no evil is absolute since up to a certain point it is a factor for good. On the other hand every good is quiescent until aroused to action by evil. Hence good from its own standpoint cannot be absolute, since it requires evil to call it into action. Thus good and evil are polar to each other and constitute part of the same underlying entity - God.

This conclusion is a second significant change in my religious thinking. Whereas hitherto I was wont to identify God only with the good and to treat evil as outside God in the sense that darkness is outside light and its negative, I am now inclined to view God as harboring evil which is as much a part of Him as the good, but as

eternally engaged in overcoming it. In fact even the anology of light and darkness as either two distinct entities or as an entity and its negative is misconceived. Properly conceived light and darkness are part of the same process and meaningless apart from each other. What is meaningless apart from anything else cannot have complete existence. Metaphysically speaking one of the truest and most important definitions of God is that found in Is. 45: I form the light and create darkness: I make peace and create evil." (see p. 200).

Polarity as the law of nature (i.e. of phenomena viewed independently of their relation to salvation) is symbolical of the nature (characteristic attribute)of God. That is perhaps the most important principle we can arrive at from a consideration of God as the Power that makes for salvation. (see p. 199).

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Saturday, July 13, 1940

The fact that it is possible to arrive at so important a principle as that of polarity as the principal attribute of godhood bears out B. Russell's statement in Freedom vs. Organization: "What can be known can be known without metaphysics, and whatever needs metaphysics for its proof cannot be proved."

The principle of polarity implies action and reaction, for action by itself or reaction by itself is movement in a single direction. As action and reaction polarity implies or is process. If polarity is the principal attribute of godhood, godhood is necessarily process and not entity. (Nicholas of Cusa saw in divinity the coincidentia oppositorum) Berdyaev-65.

Assertions concerning godhood like the foregoing are not made with the aid of metaphysics. What then are they based on? They are based on analogy. The analogy resorted in the foregoing assertions is the same as in most religious philosophies (generally designated

"theologies") namely selfhood. The invase of "Man made in the image of God.") But when it comes to selfhood we labor under the illusion that we ought to know what it is, since we experience it with greater immediacy than anything else in the world. The fact however is that having direct experience of anything is not the least guarantee that we know anything about it other than the sensation we actually experience. How many people know what fire is though they can identify it when they see it? As a rule all knowledge that is limited to immediate experience is mistaken knowledge. Most of what has been asserted about godhood has been wrong because it was derived from a mistaken idea of selfhood. A good way of testing the correctness or validity of any conception of God or godhood is to discover the particular conception of selfhood upon which it happens to be based and to analyze the latter in the light not of one's immediate experience of selfhood, but of the scientifically tested knowledge about it.

If we apply this method to the conception of God as the Power that makes for salvation, we realize that it is based on the conception of the self as that process in the life of the individual that makes for his salvation. The self viewed in this light is quite a different pattern of reality from that of the self which is merely the sum total of its functioning, both physical and mental. We shall designate the former self by the traditional religious concept "soul," and the latter by the philosophical concept "ego." The ego of an individual may or may not be interested in salvation. If it is not, the soul stands no chance of realizing itself through that individual. If it is, the soul not only realizes itself, but also survives the ego which dies with the body.

What then is the soul? On the one hand it is said to be a self, and on the other it is differentiated from the self as ego. Strange as it may seem, the fact is that each of us has an immediate experience of himself as two selves. In any experience of self-approval or self-blame, nay more, in every act of thought which is carried on as dialogue we have two selves in action. What the ego self is, has been indicated in the preceding paragraph. But what is the soul-self?

The soul or the soul-self is experienced as judging, evaluating, as not only reckoning with what the ego-self wants and knows but as weighing those wants and ideas in the light of society's wants and ideas. This is why it is experienced as conscience or reason. Moreover it seeks to direct the ego-self toward the goal of salvation (or maximum fulfillment) in accordance with what it (the soul-self) regards as salvation. The pattern of reality within which the process of the soul-self operates is therefore not the body of the individual but the complex of relationships that binds together as in a net the group of individuals of which the one in question is a member. This complex of relationships survives the death of the individuals provided other individuals take their place.

The soul as the process in the life of the individual that makes for his salvation necessarily transcends the individual. But it might be conceived as limited to the society to which the individual belongs or to society as a whole. This would be to conceive it wrongly since society as a whole is a function (in the mathematical sense) of the cosmic environment. The progress by which societies have been brought into closer proximity and rendered mutually dependent, thereb merging more and more into society, like the very creation and evolution of the human race is not man's own doing but part of the cosmic process. It is therefore only reasonable to view

the process that makes for salvation as transcending even society as a whole. Thus we arrive inevitably at the belief in the existence of God or the Power not ourselves that makes for salvation. Despite this transcendence of God in relation to the soul (which is the power within ourselves that makes for salvation) the two possess in common the objective of salvation.

One of the main obstacles to salvation inheres in the inability of the human mind to conceive relationships and processes without hypostatizing them as entities. This is the main source of all the misleading notions about the ego, the soul and God. It does not seem far fetched to regard the prohibition of idolatry as an intuitive antagonism to hypostatization of religious concepts. In any event no religion that is intent upon truth can afford to omit from its reckoning the natural tendency to hypostatization. The best way to combat it is by reviving the prohibition of idolatry a prohibition which figures so prominently in Judaism and early Christianity as almost to seem the main prerequisite to salvation.

Idolatry not only conforms to the hypostatizing tendency of the mind. It also brings easily into play the emotional and conative aspects of the mind. By personifying the gods or God, man can easily fall into emotional reactions similar to those which are aroused in him by his fellow beings. All anti-intellectualist trends in religion have an advantage over those which are based on the attempt to think clearly in being able to play on the emotions. But they are to be suspected of encouraging idolatrous tendencies.

In the light of the principle that it is as much a function of true religion to combat idolatry as to teach the correct conception of God (i.e. the conception arrived at as a result of dispassionate search for the truth, a search uninfluenced by authority) the

the two errors in traditional religion which have to be thus combated are anthropomorphism (including anthropopathetism) and theosophy (in Judaism it is Kabbalah). Therelation of anthropomorphism to the idolatious tendency to hypostatize is evident. Theosophy is here understood as the system of thought and practice based on the assumption that the cosmos is operated in all its details by final or purposive cause and that it is possible for man to control both environmental and personal forces, entitities etc. by means of the category of final causes as embodied in the names of Deity, angels, demons, etc. in total ignorance or disregard of efficient causes (usually referred to by the term "nature").

To formulate a systematic Jewish theology for our day it would be necessary to reinterpret the traditional content of the category Israel in the light of a conception of salvation to which we can subscribe with our entire being. The same kind of reinterpretation should be applied to the traditional content of the category "Torah," in the light of what can in all sincerity regard as "making for" salvation, and to the traditional content of the category "God," in the light of what we can consciously affirm concerning the "Power" that makes for salvation.

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Sunday, July 14, 1940

The relation of the soul-self (personality in ethical and spiritual sense) to the ego-self (personality in the novice and salesmanship sense) or for that matter the relation of God to the individual may be conceived as analagous to that of the gravitational force of the earth to the weight of the stone. The common sense assumption that weight inhered in the stone has given way to the scientific assumption that it is the pull of the earth upon the stone that

gives it the particular weight which it possesses. Likewise we shall in time consider it perfectly natural to view the soul-self or personality of the human being as residing in him by virtue of the spiritual gravitation of society or of the cosmos, and therefore as surviving the dissolution of the body.

The analogy must not be carried further. Physical gravitation acts with an inevitability that is absent in spiritual gravitation. It is due to that very lack of inevitability that spiritual gravitation is spiritual, for the essential mark of spirit is freedom. For that reason both the soul-self and God do not by themselves determine the kind of personality the individual shall be. There is as in physical gravitation the factor of the receptivity of the individual, which is partly determined by his physical constitution and partly by his ego-self. But neither the ego-self nor the soul-self is a fixed or invariable process. Hence the element of unpredictability in the behavior of the human being.

This opens up the entire problem of freedom. The futility of trying to solve it logically has been amply demonstrated by the vain efforts of scholasticism. Kant in his Critique of Pure Reason offers a satisfactory reason for that futility. Instead therefore of arguing about the reality of freedom, we should identify that in our experience which we choose to designate as freedom. If we shall follow this procedure we shall find it helpful to identify as freedom that which differentiates the conscious from the mechanical. Where consciousness begins is itself a question of fact. If e.g. Comptom's experiments which according to him prove the presence of the factor of unpredictability even in the behavior of electrons, is correct, we should be panpsychists. But that freedom is the differential of consciousness is borne out by any number of facts. This does not mean to say that the freedom in consciousness is synonimous with

arbitrariness. For it must be remembered that consciousness itself is not abstract awareness but a phase of the will-to-live which is either thwarted or brought in the presence (actually or imaginatively) before different objectives among which it must choose. The freedom is therefore determined by the range of the choice or by nature of the obstacle which the will wants to overcome.

No salvation without freedom. This follows from the conception of salvation as the realization of the will-to-live the maximum life or life abundant. If the will is thwarted it cannot live fully; if the will is compelled by another will to choose what it itself would not choose it is thwarted.

Since salvation presupposes freedom the conditions that make for salvation must be such as to avert the thwarting of the will or its having to act under compulsion by another will to choose its objective

The Power that makes for salvation must necessarily be conceived as realizing the difference to man between salvation and the lack of it. To realize that difference is to realize the difference between freedom and mechanical necessity. Hence we must conceive that Power as functioning in freedom and not out of absolute necessity.

Throughout all that has been said thus far we recognize consciously what has been acted upon unconsciously by most of the religious philosophers and theologians, namely, that the only source of our knowledge of God can be what we believe about our own abiding self, or soul-self, and not as they for the most part imagined, supernatural, revelation or the traditional record of it.

As a result of our own introspection and analysis of the abiding self or soul-self which we become aware of as expressing itself in the will-to-salvation we have learned the following:

1. That the Power that makes for salvation must be of the same nature as the abiding self or soul.

2. That like the latter it is process and not an entity and free and not mechanical.

Most of the fanciful conceptions which the ancients had of God was due not so much to careless introspection into the self as to their misinterpretation of what they observed. As stated before, they misinterpreted what they experienced, because of their tendency to reify or hypostatize whatever aspects of a process or totality struck their attention. How confused they were in their interpretation of what they experienced of the self is evident from their inability to decide how many souls a person had, whether one, three or five. This does not mean that we can claim great clearity for our own idea of the self. The inescapable fact about it, which has been interpreted in what has been said above concerning the soul-self and ego-self and which is what the dialectic character of our thinking seems to point to, namely its dual nature, was interpreted by the ancients as reflecting respectively the good and the evil in the world. Zoroastrianism made man the battlefield for which Ormago and Ahriman contended. The Rabbis and the Christian theologians adopted that interpretation almost in its entirety. Christianity with the place that it gives in its universe of discourse to Satan and the demons could almost be acceptable to a pious Parsee. No less the Judaism of the Kabbalists. What other interpretation can we give to the relation between the soul-self and the ego-self?

The first thing we must do is to disabuse our minds of the assumption that the soul-self is unqualifiedly good and that the ego-self is unqualifiedly evil. Here we come up against the question what is moral good and what is moral evil? But whatever their nature be, it is certain that they are by no means respectively coextensive with the soul-self and the ego-self.

I shall here make a surmise concerning the nature of moral good and evil which may turn out to be entirely wrong as I proceed to develop it. That surmise is that moral good is whatever permits the principle of polarity (which is the reciprocal functioning of what may be termed "existential" good and evil) to operate without hindrance thereby permitting "existential" evil to be overcome by existential good. Dishonesty is a moral evil because it destroys that confidence without which human beings cannot cooperate in their efforts to overcome existential evil like poverty, disease, war, etc. Salvation is necessarily the progressive attainment (since there cannot be any fixed attainment) of the kind of life in which the polarity of both physical and human nature is permitted to operate without hindrance. Accordingly, the Power that makes for salvation, though it includes as we have seen existential evil, must be the very antithesis of all that spells moral evil.

Whence then does moral evil arise? It exists in the soul-self no less than in the ego-self. In fact its existence in the soul-self which is the social self, is a far greater menace to salvation and the very existence of the human race, than in the ego-self. The mistaken social ideals have contributed to more social chaos and suffering than the selfishness and pride of the individual. Let us take the mental tendency to reification or hypostatization which is responsible for so much that is morally evil in society. Why is it that the average mind cannot grasp the reciprocal aspect of the two elements in each polarity? Socrates ascribed all moral evil to ignorance, He may not have been right as to the cause of such ignorance and as to the way to overcome it, but he was unquestionably right in ascribing moral evil to the shortcoming of the human mind. That shortcoming is in itself an existential evil which is the totality of things the Power that makes for salvation seeks to overcome. But in

man that existential evil expresses itself as moral evil, i.e. as the tendency to halt the operation of the inherent polarity in life.

A striking illustration in traditional theology of the extent to which the conception of salvation determined the conception of God is Luther's conception of salvation. Inferring from his own experience that man had no power of initiative in the attainment of salvation he concluded that it was conferred by God as an act of grace on those He had chosen. "The necessary counterpart," says G. F. Moore in History of Religions Vol. II, p. 317 of Luther's theory of man's inability to any good is predestination. On this point Luther is more rigidly deterministic than Aggustive: "God foreknows nothing contingently, but foresees and does all things by his immutable, eternal, and infallible will." He does not shrink from making God the cause of Adam's fall, or from saying that since God moves all things in all actions, it necessarily follows that he moves and acts in Satan and in wicked men. These conclusions are not reached from metaphysical premises, or by abstract reflections on the sovereignty of God; he is concerned to assert man's mere passivity in order to put the certainty of salvation on the one sure foundation, the immutable will of God."

If Luther arrived at the conclusion that God is the cause of moral no less than of existential evil, it was because his conception of salvation has nothing to do with the fulfillment of one's potentialities on this earth in the society of other human beings, but is the old Paulinian conception of deliverance from sin and death.

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Monday, July 15, 1940

The most difficult problem, it seems to me, ~~with which~~ with we have to cope is: what relation is there between the anthropocentric universe of discourse to which the conception of God as the Power that makes for salvation belongs and the scientific universe of discourse in which not only man but even the solar system cuts a relatively small figure? Before Copernicus there was no such problem, because there was only the anthropocentric universe of discourse. Even the Aristotelian conception to which Maimonides subscribed and which negated the notion that the world was created for man left an important role for man in that it affirmed a relationship between God and man. But there is something so incongruous in associating the astronomical universe with man's destiny and salvation that it almost seems absurd to speak in one breath of the Power that holds these universes together as the same Power that makes for man's salvation.

Yet it is a fact that both mathematically, chemically and physically the same principles are at work in the remotest ends of space as on the earth. It is also a fact that the human mind has managed to fathom this vast universe and to discover these principles. It thus appears that the anthropocentrism which was thrown out through the front door of science comes back through the window of idealistic philosophy or epistemology. Perhaps we must resign ourselves to the fact that we are confronted with a mystery which the human mind will never be able to penetrate but which should not in any way make us doubt the reality to which it points, namely that anthropocentrism is somehow inescapable. Objectively speaking, does it not seem as incongrous that so minute a creature as the human being should comprehend the astronomical universe and the laws that govern it as that the Power which holds the universe together should take cognizance of the human being, of his destiny and salvation?

Tuesday, July 16, 1940

The main obstruction to the functioning of polarity in human life is the attempt to subordinate it to the mechanism of habit or social uniformity. Hence the modern conception of salvation must stress the acceptance and encouragement of differences. Democracy is rightly described by Kallen as affirming that "people who are different from each other -- different in sex, in age, in color, in race, in language, in religion, in occupation, in group cultures -- can each and all live the more abundantly, the better in the spirit and in the flesh, by living together with each other, and in equal freedom exchanging goods and services." In that sense democracy comes to be religion.

The rise of Christianity and Islam was due to the interpretation of salvation as deliverance from the wrath of doom which was certain to befall those who were guilty of sin. What the sin consisted of in the cases of Jesus' mission is not clear. In the case of Mohammed's mission the sin was idolatry. The great calamaties which befel ancient peoples as a result of wars and invasions are probably the source of the belief in a final judgment day when God would punish the sinners. The Prophets of Israel were largely responsible for this interpretation. Perhaps Zoraster also contributed to the spread of that interpretation. In any event it is significant that the devastation caused by wars led unconsciously to the revision of the conception of salvation and thus to the revision of the conception of God. Viewed objectively, those wars in the course of which much human tragedy was enacted and suffering endured constituted part of the growth of the human race. The growth consisted in the approximation to the unity of mankind. The violence of war was by no means inherently necessary to that growth, but was a concomitant

of it, due to man's mental and moral unripeness. The revision of the idea of salvation as represented by Christianity and Islam is a registration of spiritual growth. To be sure, that growth was groping accidental and abortive, but a growth nevertheless. What is happening in the world at the present time is one of those upheavals that will bring about another approximation to the unity of mankind. The technological advances in the last century have precipitated the series of crises and wars which are helping to weld mankind into such unity. If the human being were a rational creature, this unity could have been effected without the futile carnage and violence. But a will that transcends the understanding of men compels them against their own selfishness and greed for power to move toward world unity. The very barbarism of the Nazis, the very cruelty of totalitarian governments are sweeping before them the obstacles to world unity, such obstacles as inhere in the competitive system of society. The hypocrisies of so called democratic institutions that were undemocratic and of the representative governments that represented selfish interests and divisive influences have kept that system alive. We are surely in the midst of the Day of Judgment, but as always it is not like what the apocalysists pictured it -- with angels flying hither and thither and with the blare of trumpets -- but as the ancient prophets of Israel knew it: a nation of barbarions falling upon corrupt civilizations.

How shall we revise the conventional conception of salvation in the light of this understanding of the calamities in our day? Salvation should be identified as the unity of mankind. Due to man's sinfulness, selfishness and arrogance both individual and collective, it is being achieved through streams of blood.

Thus it seems to me that the way to reconcile our belief in God with our knowledge of the sweeping victories of Hitler is to

sense the fact that those citories are directly and indirectly necessitating a world order based on the unity of mankind. That it should be necessary for such unity to be accomplished at the cost of so much agony and tears is due to man's sin -- the sin of preventing the divine law of polarity from operating. That is the law which for its unhampered operation requires of man the progressive synthesis of maximum individuality and maximum cooperation.

From the standpoint of the unity of mankind idolatry is a divisive force. Mohammed's role and the way he played it presents many analogies to that of Hitler. By declaring idolatry the sin of sins and in the name of monotheism bringing under one egis a multitude of nations and tribes he undoubtedly forced mankind in his part of the world to take an important step toward world unity.

The seemingly unaccountable fact of the sinful stupidity which is in most human beings a fact which is so frustrating to anyone with a sense of mission, received its explanation in traditional religion on the theory that God has predestined such human beings for eternal damnation. Predestination figures prominently in Catholicism and Protestantism. Mohammed also taught that "God leads astray whomever he wills, and guides aright whom he wills." Ezekiel seems at time quite outspoken not on predestination (as a self-conscious theological doctrine) but on an idea very similar to it.

The doctrine of predestination is a striking example of the method of reasoning employed in religion. Starting out with certain assumptions concerning God as the Power that makes for salvation, it tries to interpret what it meets in experience in conformity with that assumption. Very often it lands as a result of this procedure in some of the most ridiculous absurdities. The case of God whose

principal attribute is love and mercy being regarded as creating human beings for the sake of taking delight in their tortures is an illustration. Likewise the mountain of nonsense which has accumulated on the doctrine of transubstantiation can be accounted for only on the attempt to explain the experience which the naive believer felt in the presence of the Eucharist. Never suspecting the operation of psychological forces, the pre-modern man could not but ascribe the effect of the Eucharist on the worshipper as due to God's or Christ's direct agency. To account for that presence, the bread and wine had to be conceived as becoming, with the recital of "Hos etc etc" the very flesh and blood of the Savior.

That the pre-moderns were led to draw such absurd inferences from their attempts to interpret experience in terms of the basic faith in God as the Power that makes for salvation should not deter us from continuing that procedure. It should merely be a warning to us that in order that the inferences be not absurd, we try to be as informed as fully as possible about the nature of the experience itself. The knowledge of natural law as it operates in the inanimate, animate and human is a prerequisite to our reading aright what we experience. After such reading we should interpret it in the light of the basic assumption of religion -- the existence of a Power -- not ourselves -- that makes for man's salvation.

The unfortunate aberrations of religion as manifest in the controversies which raged about the various doctfines which had been handed down by tradition derived from the fatal ignorance of the source of these various notions and observations. Instead of regarding them as impressionistic inferences from superficially understood experiences, religious believers regarded those doctrines as revealed by God himself and therefore infallible. This fact should lead to a detailed examination of the traditional conception of revelation,

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to the exposure of the errors in it and if possible to the discovery in that conception of something that may be of permanent value.

It seems plausible to assume that whatever made a strong impression on the mind of the ancients was regarded by them as superhuman. No matter how natural a thing may appear after it has been experienced, the first time it presents itself to consciousness it strikes one as extraordinary and therefore makes a strong impression. The ancients who had much more occasion to emerge from non-consciousness to consciousness of the most natural processes of their lives were much impressed by what later came to be regarded as normal and usual. Having no way to account for what seemed to them extraordinary than ascribing it to non-human or superhuman beings, everything of such a nature was conceived as a revelation. "There is no stronger evidence of the impression which the great book of religions made upon the 'illieterate prophet' (Mohammed)" says G. F. Moore, History of Religions, p. 397, "than the fact that he could not conceive a divine revelation otherwise than as Scriptures which God 'sent down'." When we go back to Bible times we find that men belonged to an age when they were impressed by the fact that they arrived at a solution of a problem, and being so impressed were convinced that the answer was revealed to them by the deity to whom they had submitted the problem. A case in point is Jeremiah's answer to the question put to him by Johanan ben Ḥareah.

The fact that the belief in revelation was the ancient reaction to whatever made a strong impression on themmay explain in part the tendency by legend and theology to make events appear even more miraculous than tradition originally represented them or beliefs more absurd than when at first formulated. Illustrations of that are to be found aplenty in all religions. In Christianity the virginity of Mary, the immaculate conception, the Trinity, transubstant-

iantion, etc. In Judaism, the miracles enumerated in Perke-Abot, in the Passover Haggadah, etc. By thus exaggerating the miraculousness of the event or incomprehensibility of the belief its power to impress the mind was maintained. Once it impressed the mind its divine origin or its character as revelation was an inevitable inference.

Accordingly there are in the pre-modern belief in revelation two factors well worth retaining: one is the factor of impressiveness of certain events, phenomena or traditions; the other is relating the, by reason of their making a strong impression on the mind, to divine agency. To relate any event, phenomenon, tradition, institution, etc. to divine agency would in accordance with the conception of God as the Power etc. imply seeing it from the standpoing of its capacity to help man achieve salvation. That this is a highly important discipline which has been altogether too much neglected should be evident from the misues of scientific knowledge and invention, a misuse that might have been prevented has the question: "how can this particular discovery or invention be utilized for the good of mankind?" been always in the foreforont of men's consciousness.

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Thursday, July 18, 1940

(I am still in the woods. I am having a ~~hard~~ hard time trying) It is necessary /to disentagle the two strands in the history of religion which have been so interwoven that they are seldom recognized as two. One is the strand of religions practices and beliefs which sould properly be designated as magic. The whole complex of activities centered about local divinities, saints, angels and the whole host of extra-human or super-human beings identified with trees, springs, relics, amulets constitute one distinct strand. They are regarded as necessary to the attainment of specific objectives like cures, fertility of the soil, fecundity of animals or human beings, conquest of enemies. etc.

They have in common the negative trait of not having reference to any kind of totality, whether of the person, of the group or of society as a whole. They are intended to make for life, health, well-being, power or whatever is at the moment regarded as desirable. They have the positive trait in common of being based on the ignorance of cause and effect relationship in the operation of either the physical or mental world. Instead, they are based on the assumption of personal wills and final purpose as the agencies with which it is necessary to reckon in satisfying one's desparate wants or needs. It might help us to class all such activities under the heading of magical strand in religion.

In contrast with this strand there has been in the history of religion another and more signfficant strand which we might designate as soterical. The characterisitic of activities and ideals which belong to this latter strand is that they concern the totalities of personality, society, the world. They represent a high degree of self-consciousness or an awareness of selfhood in the conservation and enhancement of which men are deeply concerned. It is then that the moral and social aspects of religion emerge and with it the yearning for deliverance (salvation) from evils which beset one's whole being, whether it be one's soul, one's people, one's world of ideals with which one has come to identify oneself. The Power that makes for salvation or the maximum life, which is the fulfilment of the whole of one's self is God, not the putative being or beings to which magic ascribes the changes which are desired for the attainment of specific objectives.

In the various religions of mankind magic and soterics have been so entangled in each other that we must expect to meet with great difficulty when we try to get people to realize that despite

the superficial resemblance between the two they (ie magic and soterics) represent qualitatively different trends of the will to live. Magic is simply an expression of the different wants of human nature which act disparately without regard to any totalities as such. In magic not even the will to live as a whole becomes aware of itself. On the other hand in soterics, not only does the will to live a s a whole come into play, but the very nature of the life to be striven after becomes an object of awareness. The factor of values and preference and the conscious straining after the maximum attainable of what is regarded as ~~desirable~~ desirable is now prominent.

It is only by learning to keep these two strands distinct in our minds that we avert the mistaken tendency of regarding religion as on the decline because the development of tehnics has made it possible for man to dispense with that entire complex of activities which constitute the strand of magic in the religion of the past. We would then realize that so long as man reckons with differences in values and is determined to achieve the highest and best not merely in any particular mode of his life but in his life as a whole, he will have to wrestle with the problems of salvation. The soteric element in religion cannot be replaced as has been the magic element by any improvement in tehcnics. This is the abiding element in religion.

The history of religion embraces a twofold evolution. One line of evolution consists in the struggle on the part of outstanding religious geniuses to teach men to distinguish between magic and soterics and to realize that God is the Power that has to do chiefly with salvation of personality, society, the human race and not with gratifying men's desire apart from their salvation. The other line of evolution consists in the progressive understanding of the nature of the totalities in terms of which human life is to achi ve its maxi-

mum fulfilment. The prophets and the founds of religion furthered the former type of evolution, the social reformers have furthered the latter kind of evolution.

A striking illustration of the merging of the two strands -- the magic and the soteric -- is the case of the sancta. As a rule the sancta begin as elements in the magic strand, i.e. certain objects or human beings are singled out as having magic potency and are reckoned with from that viewpoint in the efforts of those who consider them potent. In certain civilizations some religious genius arises and protests against the interest in magic and accentuates the importance of the soteric. What then happens is that the sancta are not repudiated but receive an interpretation, usually metaphoric, which enables them to fit into the soteric scheme. The following will make this point clear "For the enlightened these seemingly meaningless acts have a deeper moral and spiritual significance, which is discovered by way of allegory. Mecca is the symbol of Paradise; the Kaaba the abode of God; the circuit about the holy house is a figure of the continual adoration which the angels render to the Lord around his throne; the race back and forth between the hills of Sofa and Menva is an image of the perplexity of the soul before God's bar; the gathering of the pilgrims on Mount Arafat should remind them of the Day of Judgment." (Moore, History of Religion, II, 463). These practices were pagan customs which had been observed as part of the pilgrimages to Mecca. Mohammed reinstated them and made them part of his scheme of salvation. What meaning they received for the enlightened Orthodox is indicated in the foregoing summary of Al. Ghazali's interpretation of these magic sancta in terms of the soteric element introduced by Islam.

It is only in the light of the foregoing distinction between the magical and the soteric elements in religion that it is possible to understand the paradoxical and phenomenon which is characteristic of both Christianity and Mohammedanism, and to some extent also of Jewish religion and that is the exaltation of faith at the expense of works. Only faith can save man, not works is a doctrine prominent in these soteric religions. Why? Is there any intrinsic connection between their being soteric and this primacy of faith? The answer is that works is the characteristic method of achieving results in magic. In fact, faith is entirely out of place in magic. It makes no difference what you think. What you do counts. Hence, in order to impress upon the followers of the soteric religion that it is n ot to be confused with magic, the very method that is employed in magic is stressed as being impotent. So far is this negation of works carried that it is applied not only to ritual but also to moral practices. Thus while the ancient soteric religion sought to counteract the tendnecy to treat magic as all important, it had a very imperfect notion of what salvation really consisted in.

We might perhaps even attribute the absurd doctrine of predestination and divine grace to the elect to the desire to wean the mind away from the magical kind of religion which treated works as so effective that they actually could compel the superhuman power to yield to the wishes of the human being who performed them. Here again the antithesis to this kind of conception could not be better stated than by turning tables and insisting that man is absolutely subject to what God wills, and can do nothing to change God's will. "A wholesome insecurity," says G. F. Moore, Hist of Rel. II, 488 "serves to counteract the presumption that all who profess the true religion and outwardly (note) observe its ordinances, or do not scandalously neglect them, will enter Paradise." "Submission

(note) to God's will (Islam) being the first commandment of God, the works of those who disbelieve in 'revelation are vain'"(ibid 489) see note on that page.

Another fact which points to the distinction between these two strands in religion is the rise of missionary zeal. It is an unmistakable sign of soteric religion. The connection is quite apparent. Since from the soteric viewpoint the wellbeing of the group, or human society as a whole, is at stake, it cannot be a matter of indifference whether others accept the soteric religion or not. By not accepting soteric religion a person jeopardizes the people to which he belongs or society as a whole. In fact to the extent that intolerance of a departure from the norm exists in what is predominantly a religion of magic it is a sign that in the very midst of the magic there are signs of the incipiency of the soteric.

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Saturday night, July 20, 1940

When in ancient religion men regarded long life, wealth and numerous offspring as the chief goods of human existence, those goods may be said to have constituted for them salvation, provided those goals were not considered attainable without conformity to laws and principles which involved the totalities of man's world, the self, society and the cosmos. If however they were striven for irrespective of such conformity, by means of worship or ritual the object of which was some kind of superhuman entity or human being deemed superhuman they constituted the objectives of magical religion. We might perhaps distinguish in each of the two strands the magical and soterical three elements, viz: goal, method and means. In actual practice there was considerable crossing of these elements from one strand to the other. A soterical religion like Christianity was distinctly soterical in its goal, but in the matter of method it might be either soterical

or magical. It was soterical when it stressed faith, love, charity. But it was magical when it stressed the sacraments. On the other hand the Chinese who offered sacrifices to the spirits of their ancestors in order to secure their help for specific goods like prosperity or fecundity did employ soteric method for magical ends. The loyalty to the spirits of the ancestors was a method or means of keeping alive the solidarity of the family, which for the Chinese was the crucial unit of society.

Whether the foregoing analysis is correct or not the distinction between magical and soterical religion seems to be a genuine one. Perhaps, however, it might be best to reckon with the fact that in all human strivings for any good, in all forms of the will-to-live, the will-to-live the life abundant or the will-to-salvation is implied. In that case the distinction between the two strands would be a distinction between the potential will to salvation and the actualized will to salvation. It is analogous to the distinction between the merely conscious and the self-conscious.

Now, in our effort to formulate a conception of God we necessarily must draw upon that aspect of reality about which we are in a position to know most with a knowledge that is direct and immediate. This condition cannot be met in the case of unconscious life. We might study the plant, but we cannot experience vegetatively. We cannot even recapture the beginning of our infantile unselfconsciousness, much less the inner life of the sub-human. The only experience which we can know with some degree of immediacy is our self-awareness.

The striving for salvation lies in the area not of mere consciousness but of self-awareness. What was said above about its being dependent upon an awareness of self and society and cosmos is proof of its being unthinkable or any other plane than self-awareness. When therefore we speak of God as the Power that makes for salvation, we

we mean that if we want ot have an idea of the reality and nature of God we must study the process of self-awareness as it function in our will to salvation. For purposes of practical religion it should be quite sufficient to identify God as that particular Power. Metaphysically we might want to know what the relation of that Power is to the Absolute, i.e. the Power that"keeps the stars in their courses." We would then have to enter into a detailed study of the relation of knowledge (self-consciousness) to consciousness and to life. Is it not apparent that this is by no means a problem which the human mind can readily, if ever, solve? To make religion therefore dependent upon our knowledge of the Absolute, is to halt the wheels of life's machinery.

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Sunday, July 21, 1940

Once we refuse to accept the traditional accounts of divine revelations, the only possibility of ex periencing the reality of godhood is in discovering some phase of one's own inner life which points to something that corresponds most nearly with what human beings have sought to express in the concept "God." The experience of selfhood should constitute the gateway through which we ought to be able to enter into the presence of God. But selfhood is not ready made waiting for us to enter. It does not even yield to command or wishful thinking. A command like (p.188)
even taken allegorically is not enough; we first have to build the

It may be that the very crux of experiencing the divine is identifying what shall constitute for us selfhood and willing that it be. The very notion of choosing among several selves implies some standard as principle of selection. Both process and principle of selection are conditions making for the attainment of the particular self which is selected or for its salvation. The god of that person would either be the standard or be regarded as reveal-

ing himself through that standard; usually the latter. It is easy for us to admit the godhoof of an ethical standard like the one we name "conscience" or "sense of honor." But what shall we think of selfhood which is centered on the attainment of power over others, like wealth or fame? What godhood are we to associate with the standard which the ambitious man applies to himself?

The answer is that for the ambitious man godhood is undoubtedly manifest in whatever helps him attain the object of his ambition. In other words, there is no one absolute concept of godhood apart from what we regard as salvation of the fulfillment of selfhood. This answer, while logically correct, is from the religious standpoint unsatisfying. What the ethically religious man wants to be sure of is that the particular salvation which shall prevail shall be not of the kind that the ambitious man considers such, but the kind which the good man regards as such. Is there anything in nature or in history to fortify the good man in this wish of his?

It is at this point that the element of miracle becomes indispensable, now more than in the past. In the past it was usual to point to certain phenomena of nature and particularly to certain events in history as proving that the good man's conception of salvation is bound to prevail. With the refutation of those proofs, most people jumped to the conclusion that there was no Absolute God and that each one had a right to his own idea of godhood, because the universe had no preference for the good man's salvation over the ambitious man's. The miracle which must happen, however, is that despite the apparent indifference of both nature and history to what one chooses to view as salvation we still will to live on the assumption that there is absolute salvation. To be absolute it cannot but be ethical, for if it is not ethical, i.e. if the conception of salvation is such as to prevent others from attaining what they

consider salvation, there is bound to be continual conflict until the entire race is destroyed. Thus while history may not point to the triumph of ethical salvation, the future is impossible without it. The conception of the Judgment Day may be the result of the realization that history or the past fails to prove the triumph of righteousness or of the good man's type of salvation.

The triumph of ethical salvation should be pictured as a condition of human life both individual and collective, in which life would be regarded as woth while living despite its termination in death. From that standpoint history may be regarded as proving, at least negatively the indispensability of ethical salvation insofar as life has come to be felt to be less worthwhile rather than more. In other words, the fact that as a result of the unethical conception of salvation which has prevailed hitherto, human life is less worth living for the modern man than for the ancient man, indicates that only the prevalence of ethical salvation would render life worthwhile.

Perhaps the sense of life's worthwhileness might itself constitute an aspect or criterion of the desirable goal or salvation. The distinction between ethical and unethical would still obtain. In that case God would be the Power that makes for life's worthwhileness. Of course the sense of worthwhileness is an emotional state and could not by itself be the whole of salvation. But as an aspect or criterion of salvation the sense of life's worthwhileness should be valid. The connection, incidentally, between that sense and the fact that suicide is a distinctively human trait and one to which the human being resorts when life ceases to be worthwhile seems to stem from the human differentia of self-consciousness. A sense of life's worthwhileness presupposes an evaluation of life in terms of totalities like self, society and cosmos. Suicide which is not caused by the desire to end some unbearable physical pain, but by a sense of

frustration, failure, shame, etc. is a cardinal sin because it indicates a denial of absolute value to either self, society or cosmos, or of life's worthwhileness. Suicide is therefore a denial of the existence of a Power that makes for such worthwhileness or a defiance of that Power.

A philosophy of religion which is not based on a metaphysical approach to problems of Being but on the psychological and sociological implications of the various manifestations of religion, or the history of religion, must necessarily make use of many doctrines and practices to prove and illustrate its various theses. Whether it be the doctrine of predestination, the sense of mission, the disparagement of works, etc., a non-metaphysical philosophy of religion will always try to get at the psychological motivation or sociological causes behind such doctrine. This kind of explanation does not mean that the doctrine ceases to have value when the causes which gave rise to it are recognized. On the contrary, what we really get is a reinterpretation which makes them tenable, despite their logical absurdity. Whether we ourselves mean to adopt them depends entirely upon the particular culture or civilization to which it belongs. If the pattern of our daily living is not taken from the civilization to which those doctrines belong, there is no reason why we should operate with them in their reinterpreted form.

(Self) Let us take the fact that in all civilizations there is a quietist trend. In the Chinese civilization we have Taoism which advocated the imitation of nature by doing nothing with purpose or effort. We find the same trend in Greek civilization. The Cynics expressed it there, I believe. In the historic religions (or more correctly civilizations) this trend is fostered under the ideal of "trust in God." In modern times Rousseau's call "Back to nature,"

is another attempt to direct the mind of men to a conception of salvation in which initiative, planning and straining after a goal are expressly deprecated. If we equate salvation with happiness, we can very well understand the psychological basis for quietism. It has long been recognized that a sure way of missing happiness is straining after it. An essential prerequisite to attaining it is not to strive after it consciously.

The question we should ask ourselves: Is there any intrinsic connection between the foregoing psychological fact and the sense of life's worthwhileness? Does it not seem, indeed, that by doing things with purpose and effort we render ourselves liable to frustration and to the consequent feeling that life is not worthwhile? Whereas, if we cherish no purposes and put forth no effort we do not raise any expectations in ourselves and in others and we are spared the sense of frustration. But does quietism then imply that we must learn to find life as it comes sufficiently worth while? By trying to improve it do we impugn the worth of its existing state? Not necessarily. What it may mean is that the more we learn to discover worthwhileness in what is, the surer we will be of happiness or salvation. Too much purpose or effort may be an indication of the inability to discover anything worthwhile in the present. Unless the present is exceptionally bad, it should not be regarded as completely devoid of the means to happiness or salvation. The chances are that, if we are unable to discover any value or significance in the present, we shall not find much or anything to satisfy us in the future.

While absence of purpose or effort may be advisable when one's own self is concerned, it is doubtful whether we should allow ourselves that exemption when others are concerned. One purpose in particular we cannot afford to ignore, if we want to do what is right, and that is so to act toward our neighbor as to have him feel as a result of